

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH March 10, 2009

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 7:00 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson; Valerie Zuercher; Mark Rafanelli, Robert Bollengier, and Mary Walsh. Clerk Gregory Coutcher arrived at 7:10 p.m. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar; and Director of Administration Robert V. Ross were present.

Director of Curriculum Nancy I. Daley, Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar; and Student Member Katherine Matook were absent. Attorney Brad Gorham arrived at 7:15 p.m. and then left the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Vice Chair Cicero read the District Mission Statement.

OPEN FORUM – A member of the audience asked if now is an appropriate time to address the Committee regarding the appointment of the baseball coach. Chair DeSack advised that this topic may be discussed during agenda item, Consent Agenda.

PRESENTATION – Student Member Report – None

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA – Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda. He introduced the two candidates brought forward this evening for appointments as junior high baseball coach and junior high softball coach.

Member Bollengier requested to pull consent agenda items, V., B., 1., a., and b. for discussion.

Vice Chair Cicero moved to accept the consent agenda with items, V., B., 1., a., and b. pulled. Seconded by Member Bollengier. Voted 6 - 0 in favor.

The following items were approved:

A. Approval of Minutes - Regular Minutes of February 24, 2009

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments

a. Pulled

b. Pulled

2. Resignations

3. Grievances

4. Recalls

5. Non-Renewals

6. Sabbaticals

C. Bills – In the amount of \$124,725.71

D. Home School Approvals

End Consent Agenda

Vice Chair Cicero made a motion to move up on the consent agenda item, V., B., 1., a., and b. – Personnel Items. Seconded by Member Zuercher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Audience member/parent John Jacavoni questioned how the District established its guidelines for choosing the junior high baseball coach. He said that an e-mail was sent out two-weeks ago notifying junior high school parents about the vacancy. Three to four parents who are involved in Little League and Major League indicated to the Athletic Director (AD) that they wanted to help out or coach the team. They did their due diligence to get their paperwork in order, only to find out today that a coach has been selected for appointment. He questioned how this decision came about so quickly and why those interested parties were not notified that the district had made its decision to hire a coach.

Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the posting/hiring process that took place. He said that the internal posting went out at the end of February. The AD informed him that the former baseball coach gave his resignation notice late; therefore, he is up against the

clock to fill the vacancy with a good coach. He said that he had one applicant with all the necessary paperwork in order. And that there was one other applicant who applied, however, he is weeks away from getting his paperwork in order and the season is about to begin. Therefore, process was followed to expedite the posting closing date to yesterday in order to appoint the candidate tonight. The Superintendent said that he then interviewed Mr. Harrington and was very pleased with him. Dr. Geismar said that he is not aware of any other interested parties. In response to Mr. Jacavoni's inquiry, baseball coach candidate Joseph Harrington said that he found out about the vacancy through the same e-mail that everyone received.

On behalf of parents, audience member/parent Mike Botieri expressed that due to a bad experience over the last couple of years with the former junior high baseball coach, parents want to make sure the boys get good instruction and that the new coach is qualified.

In response to Member Bollengier's inquiry if the District complied with procedure and if tonight's candidates have the AD's recommendation, Dr. Geismar responded in the affirmative and added that he has recommended the two candidates as well, contingent upon receipt of a non-disqualifying criminal background check for Mr. Harrington.

Clerk Coutcher arrived at this time, (7:15 p.m.).

Attorney Brad Gorham arrived at this time, (7:15 p.m.).

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In summary, Mr. Botieri said that the other applicant had talked with the AD on numerous occasions about his interest in the vacancy and then found out today that a coach has been selected for appointment tonight. He expressed his opinion that going forward, in the best interest of the kids, there needs to be clarifying rules regarding once a posting goes outside of the district.

A lengthy discussion followed and members expressed their concerns and opinions and asked clarifying questions regarding the hiring policy. Chair DeSack said that this discussion will be placed on hold at this time so that the hiring policy can be looked up on the district website and members can review it before voting on tonight's appointments.

Correspondence – (1) EWG Senior High School Improvement Team Meeting Minutes 2/5/2009

Chair DeSack asked if members had any questions or concerns regarding Correspondence. Member Bollengier pointed out a typographical error in correspondence (1).

MONTHLY STATUS REPORTS – Superintendent –

Business –

Curriculum –

Special Services –

Maintenance –

Technology – In response to Member Bollengier's observation that the Technology Report once again indicates a problem with Arthur, Chair DeSack said that this item shall carry over to a future agenda for discussion with Technology Director David Wright.

Monthly Budget Projection 2008 – 2009 – Members did not voice any questions or concerns regarding this item.

Budget Discussion/Charter Discussion/Workshop – Chair DeSack said there was a discussion at a previous School Committee meeting regarding the charter change and the Committee took a vote. She asked members if they have any further questions regarding that discussion. Member Bollengier informed Chair DeSack that there was a meeting that the Chair was absent from where additional discussion took place about the charter change. The Committee members present at that meeting suggested to go with charter change language for only one year. The idea was that a community committee be appointed to work on the problems for years 2, 3, 4, and 5. Attorney Gorham asked if the Committee wants the charter change adopted with a one year amendment. A discussion followed and

members asked clarifying questions. Chair DeSack said that Attorney Gorham's language will be used but only for one year. Attorney Gorham advised to amend the motion to include a sunset date that the provision will expire on June 30, 2010.

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The amended motion shall be sent to both towns to put on their agendas for their Town Financial Meetings. Chair DeSack voiced her opinion that this is a lot of work for only a one year change. She advised that a motion is needed to amend the proposed charter change. This provision will expire on June 30, 2010 and the present provision will be reinstated.

In response to Superintendent Geismar's concern with charter change language regarding the date in which to base the prior year's figures, Attorney Gorham said that he can add "calendar year" to the language. Audience member West Greenwich Town Manager Kevin Breene, Chair DeSack, and Attorney Gorham dialogued regarding the base date if the Committee wants the towns to pay the same as the previous year. Attorney Gorham revised the language and read the charter amendment out loud to members.

Charter Amendment for Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District:

Paragraph (D) entitled “Apportionment of construction and operating costs.” of Section VI of Chapter 80 of the Public Laws of 1965 which established the Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District is hereby amended to read as follows:

Construction and operating costs of the regional school district for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010 shall be apportioned to the member towns of the district as follows: to the amount apportioned to each town for the prior year shall be added a percentage of the increase in the budget of the district based on that town’s pupil enrollment on October 1 of the prior calendar year.

This provision shall expire on June 30, 2010 and the present provision will be reinstated.

Member Bollengier moved to amend the original motion now to coincide with the language that was just read by legal counsel which effectively will only extend it out one year with a sunset provision, so for one year, fiscal year ending June 30, 2010. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 6 – 1 in favor. Chair DeSack voted no. Chair DeSack stated that she does not oppose the charter change. She voted no because she is opposed to a charter change for only one year.

West Greenwich Town Manager Kevin Breene requested that the Clerk get the language to both Towns as soon as reasonably

possible.

Referencing the advertising of the Public Hearing Notice, Director of Administration Robert Ross asked for clarification if the charter change will be the only item discussed at the Public Hearing. Chair DeSack and Vice Chair Cicero said that the Public Hearing is to discuss both the budget and the charter change.

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Chair DeSack reverted back to Consent Agenda items, V., B., 1., a., and b. She reported that the District did comply with Policy 6310: Recruiting, Selecting, and Appointing the Teaching Staff. The policy references teachers only and does not refer to external postings. The policy does not, nor does the contract, have any guidance on selection criteria for hiring the coaching staff. Vice Chair Cicero said that Policy 6315: QUALIFICATION OF COACHES does not refer to postings. Members, Superintendent Geismar, and audience members exchanged opinions, ideas, and discussed cost-effective ways to advertise postings externally going forward. In response to Member Bollengier's request for clarification, Chair DeSack confirmed that the District did comply with the policy as it is written now. Member Bollengier recommended the Chair have the policy subcommittee review the policy. Chair DeSack asked members to decide whether to postpone, accept, or accept contingent upon the other gentleman co-coaching with the baseball coach appointee. Superintendent said

that he would want to interview the other gentleman. Member Walsh expressed her opinion that since the procedures that are in place were followed, she sees no reason to postpone these two appointments. Member Zuercher said that she agrees with Member Walsh for the softball appointment because there were no other community members interested. However, there are others interested in trying to help the baseball team but their paperwork is not yet in hand. She expressed her concern that the District needs to give the best opportunity to all who applied. She said that it is concerning to her that individuals were told they were in the process. Member Bollengier said that he partially concurs with Member Zuercher. However, if the District followed procedure and the AD is recommending these individuals, although the Committee does not like that the policy does not address external postings, that issue goes forward for future appointments. Chair DeSack said that she thought the other individuals were given the opinion that they would be considered but were never interviewed. She said that she personally has a problem with the way that this was handled and that there was no interview process. Applicants need to receive equal consideration for positions. Member Bollengier suggested that the Committee needs the AD here to respond to questions. Superintendent Geismar reiterated that when he spoke with the AD, Mr. McGrane said that the second candidate was weeks away from obtaining the necessary paperwork and the District does not have weeks. Baseball candidate Joe Harrington addressed the Committee. He expressed his understanding that the former baseball coach's

resignation was submitted late. The AD informed Principal Thompson and Principal Thompson did his best job to get the word out to parents about the vacancy. Mr. Harrington said that he does not have a problem with experienced parents helping him out. He said that he played baseball all through high school and he coached little League for 3 years prior to the dates shown on his resume. Mr. Harrington expressed his opinion that the short period of time was created by the inconsideration of the coach not returning. And that everyone else did their job to the best of their ability.

Member Rafanelli made a motion to accept these two candidates for the positions of softball and baseball at the junior high school. Seconded by Member Walsh.

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Member Bollengier advised to add to the motion that one of the appointments is conditional upon receipt of a clean background check.

Member Rafanelli amended his motion to add contingent upon submission of all successful requirements.

Voted: 7 – 0 in favor.

The following ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA items were approved:

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)

- a. Steven Hoard as Jr. High Softball Coach, Stipend \$2,906.16; effective for the 2009 – 2010 season.**
- b. Joseph Harrington as Jr. High Baseball Coach, Stipend \$2,906.16; effective for the 2009 – 2010 season, contingent upon receipt of a non-disqualifying Criminal Background Check**

Attorney Gorham left the meeting at this time, (8:06 p.m.).

NEW BUSINESS – In\$ite Certification – District Treasurer Kate LaCroix gave an explanation of the annual In\$ite Expenditure Report and its process. She said that the report represents the 2008 Audited Financial Statement and has to be ratified by the School Committee each year. Mrs. LaCroix answered Member Bollengier's clarifying questions.

Clerk Coutcher moved to accept the InSite Certification as presented. Seconded by Member Bollengier. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

Chair DeSack signed the original InSite Certification report.

2008 Audit Report – Superintendent Geismar introduced Pat Boucher

of Bacon & Company, CPA, and said that she is here for her annual visit to answer questions regarding the audit. Ms. Boucher gave a brief overview of the 2008 Audit Report. She and Ms. LaCroix answered Member Bollengier's questions regarding unfunded liability and obtaining a qualified vs. unqualified opinion for next year.

Final Budget 2009 – 2010 – Chair DeSack gave a brief description of the three proposed budgets enclosed in members' packets. (1) Reflects no charter change and is equal to last year's budget; (2) Requires a charter change and is the same as last year with no increase to budget; and (3) Reflects no charter change with the maximum allowable under 3050. A discussion ensued and members exchanged ideas and opinions surrounding next year's total budget amount, the Committees' promise to the Towns to attempt to come in flat, and the sensitive economical times. Chair DeSack advised that

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tonight's motion to adopt the budget is to agree on a dollar amount. How the Committee gets to that dollar amount will depend on the outcome at the Financial Meetings. The Committees' next step is to educate the public about what a charter change means. The communities will vote on two appropriations – one if the charter change passes and one if the charter change does not pass. In response to Vice Chair Cicero's inquiry, Chair DeSack said the Committee will decide on budget cuts before the new budget year

begins.

Member Bollengier made a motion that the Committee vote to approve the figure of \$22,460,413 for the 2009 – 2010 budget.

In response to Clerk Coutcher's comments, Chair DeSack advised that Member Bollengier's motion would need to be amended to reflect a figure of \$29,404,230.

Member Bollengier requested the Chair's permission to withdraw his motion and amend it so the amount of the motion for approval under the operations is \$29,404,230. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

Chair DeSack clarified that next year's total budget will be \$29,404,230. In response to Director of Administration Robert Ross request for confirmation that the District will go with one single budget in the amount of \$29,404,230 and one advertisement, Chair DeSack said yes. Chair DeSack concluded that based on 3050 with no charter change, because the District cannot count on the change, that amount gives the District a zero increase for next year. In response to Vice Chair Cicero's inquiry regarding forming a subcommittee for the creation of ideas on how to save money and bring money into the district, Chair DeSack said to add, discussion of creation of committee to explore cost savings to the next regular meeting agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Capital Project Update – Superintendent Geismar reported that a very lengthy Building Committee meeting took place last Thursday night. Another meeting will take place tomorrow night to review Phase II of the project. Concerns about Metcalf’s gym floor we raised. The floor issues will be addressed over April break. Vice Chair Cicero voiced concern that she wants to ensure the floor is fixed prior to applying the polyurethane. Dr. Geismar said that the Building Committee withheld funds from the floor contractor. Luis Torrado is the main manager of the project. And Jim Wolohoojian is on top of the project as well. The Superintendent reported that he and Bob Ross met with Luis Torrado regarding the stimulus packet wish list. The list was submitted to the state. The gentleman at state indicated that he does not have a lot of hope that the District will get anything but the District is in the queue. Mr. Ross reported that Luis Torrado is on target for his deadlines to begin projects and submit designs to the state and in RFP format for the public. Superintendent reported that the District is doing pretty well on the money side of it. Dr. Geismar answered Member Rafanelli’s questions regarding funds that are earmarked for the track project.

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REPORTS/COMMENTS – None

IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS –Wednesday, March 11,

**2009-Building Committee Meeting; Wednesday, March 18,
2009-Building Committee Meeting; Monday, March 23, 2009-Public
Hearing; Tuesday, March 24, 2009-School Committee Meeting (Metcalf
Presentation - @ Metcalf School); Wednesday, March 25,
2009-Building Committee Meeting; Tuesday, April 14, 2009-School
Committee Meeting-(Senior High Presentation): Monday, April 20,
2009-District Financial Meeting; Tuesday, April 28, 2009-School
Committee presentation-(Junior High Presentation)**

EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 – Vice Chair Cicero moved to go into Executive Session at 8:55 p.m. in accordance with 42-46-5 (a)(9) – Collective Bargaining Agreement – Grievance(s), and 42-46-5 (2) – Collective Bargaining Agreement – Negotiation Discussion, and 42-46-5 (2) Collective Bargaining Agreement – Pending Litigation. Seconded Member —————Bollengier. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

Meeting recessed to Executive Session at 8:55 p.m.

Member Zuercher moved to reconvene to Open Session. Seconded by Member Walsh. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.

Meeting reconvened to Open Session at 9:25 p.m.

No votes were taken during Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn made by Member Walsh.

Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned 9:25 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK